

Balmoral Victoria Sire Evaluation Group

Trial News

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Our Chairman - Tom Silcock

Chairman's report

We wish all our readers and supporters a merry Christmas and great genetic outcomes for the coming year. Have you got a ram that you want to evaluate or do you want to bench mark your flock?

Now is your opportunity with entries now open for our next joining. (Entry form attached)

This year we move our joining to a new host property run by Nick and Yvonne Falkenburg at the Wannan between Hamilton and Coleraine. They run an impressive fine wool flock on their property "Mepungah". We thank Nick and Yvonne for making their flock and property available. Read more in a later article.

Two weeks pre joining next year, we currently plan to shut half the AI ewes up for a short period to measure the impact on number of lambs conceived. We have strong evidence that this will increase multiple conceptions

We thank Tom Sweeny and his team at Wando Estate for all their help and support they continue to supply, as we have undergone a number of data collecting activities, including a much more intensive monitoring of lambing this year, carried out mostly by Tom and Julia Waldron. All new lambs were tagged daily at birth and weighed. Prior to lambing and since, we have been training the ewes and now their lambs as well, to walk through a race that records their ear tags. This system called "Pedigree Match Maker", will be evaluated against the manually mothering up, as well as being compared to utilizing DNA samples to get pedigree.

Our intention is to begin to monitor lambs for daily weight from weaning onwards as we aim to develop an automated daily weight monitoring system. All this extra trial work has been made possible from sponsorship from DEPI, MLA and AWI, especially to cover the costs of DNA. The additional trials are being managed by Steve and Debbie Milne, supported with a steering committee.



All of the above trial results to date and a lot more will be displayed at our **annual field day, on the 11th of April**, along with progeny from both this year's lambing and the 2012 drop. Andrew Michael (read article later) one of the guest speakers, will also give a fascinating insight into his experiences of utilizing the very latest developments to speed up genetic selection. This year we will also feature a lot of the latest electronic ear equipment. Write the date in your new diary now, as a day not to miss!

Recently there has been some public breeder criticism of utilizing breeding values, produced by Sheep Genetics. Sire Evaluation utilizes these to provide its trial results. I make the following personal comments, but preface them by acknowledge some may consider my opinion biased, because I'm a stud breeder, plus I currently chair the national Australian Merino Sire Evaluation Association (AMSEA) as well as our local site and I also sit on the Sheep Genetics Advisory Committee (SGAC).

Over many generations my family has been involved in the industry first as wool processors, then wool buyers and more recently as stud breeders. Always we have wanted to utilize the best measurements and evaluation systems to maximize results. All worthy measuring systems need to be able to stand up to scrutiny and even the very best measuring animal may not be worthy of using, because of other issues.

Our Sire Evaluation trials provide the best evaluation comparisons possible. Firstly we provide a visual comparison of progeny from entered rams, joined to similar ewes and run equally as an evaluation mob. Evaluation takes place through the lamb's life, finishing after an 18 month of age full wool assessment.

We measure everything we can. We then provide a "Site Report" that only compares our trial results. Those trial results then go to Sheep Genetics, who then combine them with all other data collected nationally and in turn then provides us with Australian Sheep Breeding Values (ASBVs).

These results are then made available through our annual booklet publication "Merino Superior Sires". AMSEA also provides results on line as they become available.

My point is, there has always been and always will be people who don't want to be the early adopters. Some, who have had bad experiences, choose not to be exposed to the problem again. Many early adopters often have to sort out problems on the way through, but they do so because they prefer to utilize all the tools available to them.

A good historical comparison is, there was a time when many in the industry were sceptical of micron measurement and resisted its use, but now it is widely accepted and used. Our trial caters for all; it provides visual comparisons, raw data comparisons, within flock comparisons and ASBVs. All are only tools. Breeders can choose to utilize any of, or all those tools they like and they can believe what they like, but some of us want to utilize and develop all the tools available to us, the latest one being DNA.

I recognize the strong support I receive from our Executive Hugh Jarvis, Michael Craig and Andrew Howells along with other Elders staff. Without the physical help of people and great sponsorship support, we couldn't offer the trials we do for all the public to benefit from. We always welcome new people to become involved.



The Team at work;
A big thank you to all
those who gave of
their time throughout
the year.

Friday 11th April

Annual Progeny Display Day

This is your only chance to inspect the 2012 &
2013 Elders Victoria Sire Evaluation Progeny

Host site: Wando Estate 10am - 6pm

Wando (Casterton) – 2012 & 2013 drop sires

Participating studs with progeny on display

Bindawarra, Connewarren, Glenpaen, Gringegalgona,
Hazeldean, Koorinal, Lachlan, Leachim, The Mountain
Dam, Moojepin, Nareeb Nareeb, Nerstane, One Oak,
Pooginook, Roseville Park, Toland Poll, Yalgoo, Yiddinga.
Ridgeway, Kurra Wirra Historical Sires, Bundaleer, Mount Yulong, Tuckwood,
Hannaton Poll, Kia Ora

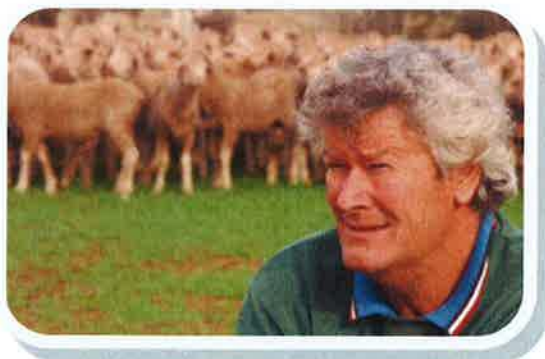
**Tapping into the
next Genetics
Generation**

Don't miss our Special Guest Speaker Andrew Michael with B.B.Q and refreshments from 12pm at Wando Estate

JIVET & DNA SUPERCHARGE SHEEP BREEDING AT LEAHCIM

Andrew Michael has taken sheep breeding beyond the cutting edge and into new territory, with a new program that is super-charging the speed of genetic gain in his flock. Known as JIVET - juvenile in vitro embryo transfer - the program has already delivered stud lambs years in advance of those from his conventionally joined flock, thanks to a combination of old-school visual appraisal and traditional measurement techniques, with the latest in DNA testing and embryo collection methods.

Put simply, the program identifies superior breeding stock at a very early age (within weeks of birth); uses advanced embryo technology to collect eggs from ewe lambs at approximately six to eight weeks of age, joining then occurs in a test tube before the lambs are carried to term in surrogate mothers.



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'Wando ' Host property 2012

Since my last report a lot has happened in the past four months.

Firstly and most important a fantastic spring with excellent pasture grass and clover growth. With 350mm of rainfall for the months of August thru to November has certainly put us in the driver's seat. Spring pasture growth rates at 50kg DM/day/ha with feed tests recorded at 13.5ME and 28% protein and 88% digestibility.

So no excuses for the livestock not pushing production.

With the 2012 drop growth rate has been at 120 to 150grams/day from August to end of September and will be weighed next week to work over growth rates from October to now and I expect them to be well in excess of previous rate due to the better part of the season. Breech and dag scores have also been measured.

With the 2013 drop data collection and tagging was conducted at lambing. Tom Silcock and Tom carried out this process and I was certainly grateful as it was a big task to carry out.

Second job after lambing was conducted before lamb marking was drafting off 2013 lambs, recording & auditing all tags and udder scoring ewes to remove and record dries. Also at the same time the lambs were placed in a cradle, bare breach and wrinkle score, pigment score, ear mark, scan and record all ear tags plus collect a DNA sample. The next task will be weaning which will be third week of December and the lambs will be weighed to work out growth rates since birth.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in the sire evaluation trial and wish everyone a merry Christmas and hopefully a fantastic year ahead.

Tom Sweeney



" Mepungah Past Co "-Host Property 2014-

Next year we can hopefully welcome Nick & Yvonne Falkenberg and their property Mepungah to the trial but it is dependent on us receiving DNA funding.

The Mepungah flock is a self replacing fine wool enterprise located 20km West of Hamilton in Victoria.

Breeding emphasis is on high production per hA, their docking ability is critical. Flock average is 18.0u.

The merino flock consists of 9,000 ewes, a total of 28,500 sheep are shorn.

Bloodlines: Roseville Park sires 1989- 2000, Merryville blood sires (Toolang, Grangeburn and the Grange) from 2000- 2006 Gringegalgona sires 2007 - present.

We select for structurally sound large long bodied sheep that produce bright long stapled wool freely, but with bulk, on reasonably plain bodies.

Only low micron and high fleece weight indexed rams are then selected. The farm receives an average rainfall of



Yvonne & Nick Falkenberg– After taming Cheetahs becoming the Host property should be a walk in the (Wildlife) Park.

AMSEA Update Ben Swain, Executive Officer

Recently AMSEA held its AGM and Executive meeting, at which Tom Silcock was returned to the role of Chairman. This will be Tom's 4th year as AMSEA Chairman and will continue the close interaction between the Elders Victoria site and AMSEA.



Several issues of note were discussed at the recent meeting. One in particular was succession planning at sire evaluation sites. The majority of site representatives that attend AMSEA meetings to represent their respective sites, have remained the same person for many years. Whilst this has benefited AMSEA by providing a depth of experience and stability, it is important for all sites to be encouraging the next generation of sheep breeders to become involved. This doesn't mean voting in the person that doesn't turn up to the meeting, or throwing a newcomer in the deep end! Succession planning is about having a plan for who is going to be your site's representative in 3, 5 or even 10 years and putting in place the processes now to ensure that person is up to speed when the time comes for them to step up.

After 5 years of successfully genotyping the majority of sires that have been entered in sire evaluation, AMSEA has decided that in 2014 this will be left up to entrants. A 12K SNP test is now commercially available through the Sheep CRC. This test will provide a similar level of accuracy to the previous 50K test that AMSEA has been facilitating without the need for industry subsidies. If you are planning on entering a sire in next year's trial, you might like to consider taking a blood sample and getting a 12K SNP test carried out.

Balmoral Sire Evaluation Results: 2012 Drop – Results to Date

Some early results are available for the 2012 drop. Whilst the full assessment will take place in April next year, these early results provide a useful indication on where the sires are lining up at this stage.

Table 1: Body Weight, Carcase Scanning and WEC Flock Breeding Values

Breeders flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Flock Breeding Values (deviations)					
		WT			FAT	EMD	WEC
		W	kg Y	H	mm H	mm H	% Y
Bindawarra, 080358	43	-0.4	-1.7	-1.0	0.2	0.3	13
Connewarran, 8016	38	-0.9	-2.0	-2.6	-0.5	-0.4	56
Glenpaen, 080356	26	-1.5	-2.2	-1.9	-0.1	0.6	-23
Gringegalgona, 071609	56	1.2	1.9	1.9	-0.7	-1.1	24
Hazeldean, 8.3561	22	0.2	-1.3	-2.4	-0.1	-0.4	-14
Koorringal, 102277	32	-1.7	-4.5	-5.0	-0.4	-0.7	-53
Lachlan Merinos, 08SP30	37	4.5	10.1	11.5	0.0	0.9	44
Leahcim Poll, 090918	45	-0.4	-1.4	-1.4	0.4	0.9	-21
Moojepin, 100248	49	3.0	7.6	8.7	2.2	2.3	-29
Nareeb Nareeb, 100655	33	-1.0	0.2	-0.1	0.2	0.1	153
Nerstane, 080121	34	-1.7	-4.0	-4.2	0.7	-0.2	-39
One Oak No. 2, BL0010	32	1.6	4.0	5.2	0.1	0.0	33
Pooginook, Clark	44	-0.3	-0.5	-0.3	-0.1	-0.1	-31
Ridgway Poll, 091137	52	-0.7	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.2	-28
Roseville Park, 090014	32	-0.4	-0.2	-0.7	-0.9	-1.3	44
The Mountain Dam, 11/CWA029	36	0.7	0.0	-0.6	-0.5	0.2	-26
Toland Poll, 111021	25	1.9	3.5	3.7	0.1	1.0	-35
Yalgoo, 070441	45	-1.9	-5.5	-6.4	-0.1	-0.5	-17
Yiddinga, 101057	35	-1.2	-2.1	-2.0	-0.8	-1.7	76
Average performance	38	23.9	26.0	37.8	2.9	22.6	
		kg	kg	kg	mm	mm	

^ W = Weaning (42 to 120 days); Y = Yearling (300 to 400 days); H= Hogget (400 to 540 days)

Results contd

Table 2: Fleece Post Weaning Research Flock Breeding Values

Breeder's flock, Sire name	Number of progeny	Research Flock Breeding Values (deviations)		
		GFW	FD	FDCV
		% P [^]	µm P	% P
Bindawarra, 080358	43	2	0.7	0.9
Connewarran, 8016	38	-10	-0.8	-0.5
Glenpaen, 080356	26	-6	0.7	-0.4
Gringegalga, 071609	56	13	-0.1	-0.3
Hazeldean, 8.3561	22	14	-0.6	-0.6
Koorringal, 102277	32	-2	-0.9	1.5
Lachlan Merinos, 08SP30	37	-9	0.1	-1.2
Leahcim Poll, 090918	45	-20	-0.3	-1.1
Moojepin, 100248	49	2	1.4	0.3
Nareeb Nareeb, 100655	33	3	0.0	0.0
Nerstane, 080121	34	13	-0.4	0.7
One Oak No. 2, BL0010	32	-2	-0.4	-0.2
Pooginook, Clark	44	5	0.0	1.5
Ridgway Poll, 091137	52	4	-0.1	-1.3
Roseville Park, 090014	32	7	0.1	-0.7
The Mountain Dam, 11/CWA029	36	3	1.4	1.5
Toland Poll, 111021	25	13	1.5	0.3
Yalgoo, 070441	45	-19	-2.0	-1.6
Yiddinga, 101057	35	-10	-0.4	1.2
Average performance	38	1.8	15.4	20.3
		kg	µm	%

[^] P = Post Weaning (210 to 300 days)

Please note: The fleece traits reported above have been taken at the Post Weaning Stage (210 - 300 days). At this point in time Sheep Genetics does not provide industry approved breeding values for fleece traits measured at the Post Weaning Stage.

The breeding values reported above for fleece traits measured at the Post Weaning Stage are **Research Breeding Values (RBVs)**.

Caution should be used when using RBVs when making selection and breeding decisions.

Indexes are also unavailable for animals with fleece measurements only taken at the Post Weaning Stage.

AWI is currently supporting a project that will see the development of Post Weaning Fleece Trait Breeding Values. It is hoped that in the future, approved breeding values will be available for these traits.

WOW and Dam Pedigree Comparison PDS Trial Project Update Nov 2013

The comparison of methods of dam identification is nearing completion. Lambs were tagged at birth and matched to their dams through visual identification (Ewes had large ear tags able to be read from a distance). Manual recording of this information was done using a "Datamars" device.



Dam identification using Pedigree Match Maker is underway at present and will continue until the lambs are weaned. The analysis to date indicates the importance of training the ewes and the importance of a suitable attractant on offer at all times.



DNA samples were taken from the ewes in August. DNA samples from the lambs were collected in October in conjunction with ear notching and scoring for breech and body wrinkle. Analysis of these samples to determine parentage is underway at present.

Once the analysis for PMM and DNA parentage tests are received a comparison of the effectiveness and costs of the three dam identification methods will be made.

Lambs will be weaned in December and the "Walk over Weighing" part of the project will commence. This part of the project hopes to assess the effectiveness and benefits of Walk over Weighing in a large commercial situation.

Project Managers

Steve and Debbie Milne

Maidens to Matrons Project Background

The DEPI BESTWOOL/BESTLAMB Producer Network is working with a number of sheep producers across the state, including four in the South West as part of the Maidens to Matrons project. The project was initiated after the National Research and Development Extension Plan came to the conclusion that sheep reproduction rates had remained unchanged for the last twenty years and that this was limiting the progress of the industry. It aims to lift the weaning rates for 2 year old maidens merino ewes (50%), to the current national average for adult ewes (77%) and to increase the success rate for joining ewe lambs in maternal, terminal and merino flocks . The project will provide more accurate base-line data on the reproductive performance of 2 year old maidens and the growth pathways of weaners up until joining in response to feed quantity and quality. The data will be used to develop individual producer case studies and contribute to developing a best practice guide for early reproductive success for wool and meat sheep.

Eight different farms are involved in the project, four of them being in Western Victoria; at Streatham, Dunkeld, Wando Vale, and Apsley. 2011 maiden ewes and 2012 Weaners were tagged with electronic tags to enable individual data collection on weights, condition scores and scanning results from weaning through until after the weaning of their first lamb. The data will be used to put together a profile of each flock showing how joining percentages, lambing percentages, and weaning percentages respond to changes in liveweight, condition score and feed quality. Individual producers are using the information collected to make more informed management decisions. Additionally involvement in the project is helping farmers become more familiar and comfortable with using the technology.

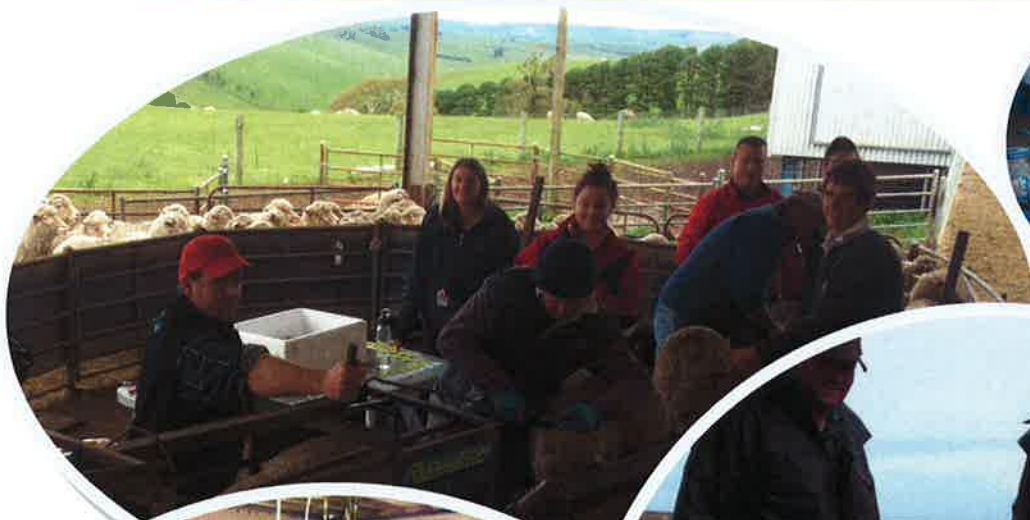
The 2012 BSE progeny at Wando Estate are one of the flocks being monitored as part of the project. They have been weighed bi-monthly since May and at each weight a feed test and assessment of feed on offer has been taken, as well as a mob based WEC over spring. To tie in with the Balmoral Sire Evaluation group's PDS using Walk over Weighing technology the plan is to use bi-monthly weights collected as part of M2M to validate WOW data in the 2013 Sire Evaluation progeny .

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Ruth Corrigan DEPI

Would you like to be involved in the Trial?
Contact Tom Silcock
Ph 03 5388 2238





THE WOOLMARK COMPANY

Levi's wool denim 501 jeans

02 December 2013

Iconic American apparel brand, Levi Strauss & Co. has joined with The Woolmark Company for an historical development: [Levi's® wool denim 501® jeans](#).

Made from Merino wool and cotton, these 501® jeans look like conventional denim but, as Levi Strauss & Co. state on their website, "they can do things no ordinary denim jeans can do, like keep you warmer in cold weather".

The Woolmark Company CEO Stuart McCullough said Levi's® jeans are one of the most recognisable pieces of clothing in the world, capturing the imagination and loyalty of people for generations.

"We are delighted to partner with Levi Strauss & Co., a classic American brand famous for its quality, integrity and pioneering spirit. These values are completely in line with what The Woolmark Company represents across the world," Mr McCullough said.

"By incorporating some Merino wool with the cotton, these wool denim 501® jeans feel warm to the touch, even in winter, and when wet feel drier on the skin and more comfortable than 100 per cent cotton.

"We look forward to continuing our creative collaboration with Levi's® and supporting their pursuit of product innovation." The wool denim 501® jean is available in stores across the United States, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong and China. It is also available for purchase online (although the company does not ship to Australia). Levi Strauss & Co. has also created an innovative Holiday 2013 product line featuring Australian Merino wool. The collection includes a diverse range of men's and women's knitwear as well as the wool/denim blend of the classic 501® jean. The range highlights the signature style and craftsmanship of Levi's® together with the benefits of Australian Merino wool, including the fibre's exceptional versatility, warmth and natural elasticity.



Levi's® wool denim 501® jeans are branded with the Wool Blend logo.



AWI CEO Stuart McCullough

Sire Entry Form



1. Site details for the sire being entered

- 1a. Site & year being entered Site: Year:
 1b. Other sites & years the sire has been entered:
 1c. To the best of your knowledge has the sire been genotyped: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unsure

2. Sire details

- 2a. Sire's stud/flock name:
 2b. Sire's identification:
 2c. Sire's year of birth (drop):
 2d. Sire's stud/flock code:
 2e. Breed of stud/flock (Merino or Poll Merino. If other breed give details):
 2f. Sire's 16 digit code [see sample code below:]

Example 16 digit code:	50	49	67	20	10	09	00	12
	Breed	Flock	Year of drop	On farm ID				

- 2g. Is the sire currently alive: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 2h. Is semen available for sale: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 2i. Sire of sire (16 digit code): [see sample code above:]
 2j. Grand sire of sire (16 digit code): [see sample code above:]

3. Owner details - Owner and contact for inquiries about the sire, plus owner(s) permission

- 3a. Owner:
 3b. Contact: First name: Surname:
 3c. Address:
 3d. Town: Postcode:
 3e. Phone: Mobile:
 3f. Fax: Email:
 3g. Does the owner of the sire give permission to enter the sire into this sire evaluation site:
☐ Yes ☐ No Owner signature: Date:
 3h. Does the owner of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in Merino Superior Sires:
☐ Yes ☐ No Owner signature: Date:
 3i.* Does the owner of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in Sheep Genetics reports:
☐ Yes ☐ No Owner signature: Date:

* If you are an existing Sheep Genetics member, your default Sheep Genetics publication settings for your flock code will be used.

4. Breeder details - only fill in section 4 if the breeders details are different to the owners details in section 3.

- 4a. Breeder:
 4b. Contact: First name: Surname:
 4c. Address:
 4d. Town: Postcode:
 4e. Phone: Mobile:
 4f. Fax: Email:
 4g. Does the breeder of the sire give permission to enter the sire into this sire evaluation site:
☐ Yes ☐ No Breeder signature: Date:
 4h. Does the breeder of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in Merino Superior Sires:
☐ Yes ☐ No Breeder signature: Date:
 4i.* Does the breeder of the sire give permission to publish the sire's results in Sheep Genetics reports:
☐ Yes ☐ No Breeder signature: Date:

* If you are an existing Sheep Genetics member, your default Sheep Genetics publication settings for your flock code will be used.

Note: Sires entered will be included in the AMSEA database and managed by AMSEA.

5. Signature of entrant

I believe all the above details to be true: Date:

6. Stud/flock details - if you are a first time entrant of sire evaluation please provide a short summary of your stud/flock's history and breeding objective.

.....

Please email, mail or fax entry to the Attention of Tom Silcock
themountindam@bigpond.com / 429 Silcocks Rd Telangatuk East 3401 or
 fax number 53 882235

Australian National Merino Sire Evaluation Association Executive Committee (AMSEA)

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Jock McLaren NSW New England
Rick Keogh QLD
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